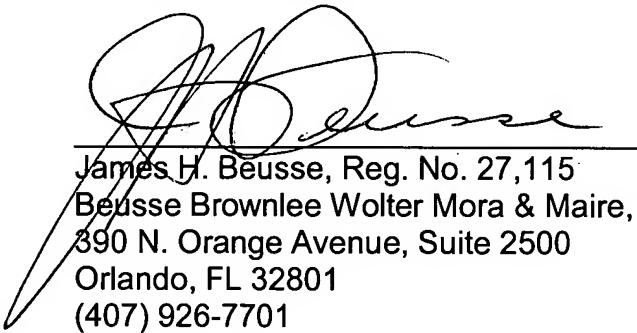


REMARKS

Upon entry of this amendment, claims 6-24 will remain in this application. Each of these claims are believed to be patentably distinguishable over the prior art. The claims of the parent case to this application were rejected over the combination of U.S. Patent Nos. 6,312,874 (Chan) and 6,468,898 (Usami). The present claims are distinguishable for at least the reason that neither of these patents teach nor suggest a non-metallic barrier layer interposed between a passivation layer and a metallic mask layer to prevent contamination of a low-k dielectric in a semiconductor manufacturing process.

Respectfully submitted,



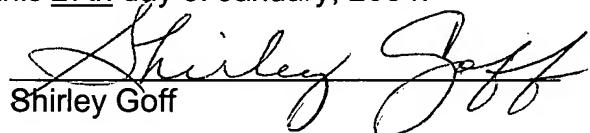
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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I HEREBY CERTIFY that this Preliminary Amendment is being mailed to:
Mail Stop Patent Application, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450,
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on this 27th day of January, 2004.


Shirley Goff